Government are in the process of reviewing the nuclear policy of the country. Government has also announced that India will observe a voluntary moratorium and refrain from conducting underground nuclear test explosions.

Ratification of CTBT

1718. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item published in the Hindustan Times, dated 18th May, 1998 captioned "CTBT office hopes Indian Tests would prompt more ratifications" soon and give it universal acceptance;

(b) whether the Indian Ambassador to the U.N. met recently CTBT officials in Vienna and explained reasons for conducting the nuclear tests and also out lined India's conditions for acceptance by CTBT; and

(c) if so, Government's latest stand regarding ratification of CTBT keeping in view Article 15 of the treaty which clearly states that no country can sign it with reservations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir. Our Ambassador to Austria, who is also India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Offices based in Vienna, met Wolfgang Hoffman, Director General of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO) and handed over Government's press statements, issued after the nuclear tests at Pokhran.

(c) Government have declared that we would be willing to consider adhering to some of the undertakings of the CTBT Government have also stated that these decisions cannot be taken in a vacuum but would depend upon reciprocal responses.

Illegal migration of Indian Workers

1719. PROF. RAM KAPSE:
SHRIMATI MALTI SHARMA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Malta Boat tragedy of the Greek Coast last year, which claimed over 225 Indian lives has failed to deter the continued migration of Indian workers by illegal means;

(b) if so, what is the number of these migrants and also of those apprehended in the process since the Malta-tragedy; and

(c) the steps taken to effectively prevent such migration?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE): (a) 25 persons have so far been charged for their involvement in the Malta boat tragedy. Investigation is continuing. Government continues to receive reports of the presence abroad of Indian immigrants whose residence status is not legal.

(b) As per information available, about 8600 Indian nationals have been found, since the Malta boat tragedy in December, 1996, to be allegedly staying illegally in various countries abroad, almost all of whom have been apprehended.

(c) The following procedural safeguards have been put in place to check such migration;

(i) It is obligatory for all unskilled, semi-skilled and certain categories of skilled workers to get emigration clearance from the Ministry of Labour before proceeding abroad for employment.

(ii) It is a cognizable offence for anyone to advertise in a newspaper, soliciting applications for employment abroad, without quoting the Ministry of Labour's licence number.

3001/25-1-99.

(iii) As the immigration authorities act on behalf of the Protector General of Emigrants, the Protector of emigrants are under instructions to conduct surprise checks to see that the clauses of the Emigration Act are strictly implemented and persons are not allowed to travel without emigration clearance.

(iv) Indian diplomatic missions abroad are under instructions to intimate the names of fraudulent recruiting agents/employers to the Protector General of Emigrants, Ministry of Labour to help prevent recurrence of such malpractices.

(v) Complaints received against recruiting agents by the Ministry of Labour are examined in consultation with the concerned Indian diplomatic missions abroad and action for suspension/ cancellation of their registration certificates is taken according to the merits of the cases under the Emigration Act, 1983.

India's stand on Sri Lanka's Entry into G-15

1720. DR. MOHAN BABU: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to refer to answer to Starred Question 40 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 28th May, 1998 and state the stand taken by India in regard to Sri Lanka's entry into G-15?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE): On Sri Lanka's entry into G-15, given India's close and friendly relations with Sri Lanka, India took the lead to propose the admission of Sri Lanka and to build a consensus around the decision. Accordingly, Sri Lanka will join as the 17th Member of the Grouping at the Ninth Summit in Jamaica in Feburary, 1999.

China's Allegation against India

1721. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY:
SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL:
DR. V. VENKATESHWAR RAO:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to Beijing's claim, put forth in the form for official Xinhua agency commentary that India has started in 1962 war and was occupying 90,000 square kilometres of its territory apart from pursuing policy of expansion which appeared in the Hindustan Times dated 20th May, 1998;

(b) whether India summoned its Ambassador in Beijing for urgent consultations/talks in this regard; and

(c) if so, what steps Government have so far taken at the diplomatic level to refute China's assertion and to deal firmly with such irresponsible provocations/ threats by our neighbouring country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. The visit of our Ambassador from May 20-27, 1998 was not related to this report.

(c) India's position in regard to the India-China boundary question is well known. China is in occupation of 38,000 square kilometers of Indian territory in the Western sector, including the Aksai Chin region of J&K. In additon, 5,180 square kilometers of territory in POK wad ceded illegally by Pakistan to China under their so-called boundary agreement of 1963. Government have consistently rejected the Chinese claim to 90,000 square kilometers of Indian territory in the eastern sector in Arunachal Pradesh which is an integral part of India.

India and China are committed to work towards a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable settlement of the boundary question.